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The Awakening

A Fantasy of the Out Doors

BY

Edgar Carlisle MacMechen

THE ANT

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PROLOGUE.

(The curtain parts, revealing the bust of Pan on a pedestal, a moonlit forest his background.)

PAN:

TO the weary of mind and of heart
I speak for the fair Out of Doors.
Come forth from the shop and the mart
Where the black smoke pours and the factory roars,
Where the air is poisoned and stale.
Oh, come to the woods and the hills,
But come in the spirit of play,
And there you will shed all your ills,
When you tread the way where the Woods Folk stray,
When you learn the lure of the trail.

Come, where the weary grow wise,
Where the beaver circles the trees,
Where the great trout rise to the darting flies,
Where the lake is rippled by breeze
And the marmot whistles his lair;
Where the mule deer dreams by the foaming streams,
Where the bull elk bugles his mate
On the hilltop there, where the solitaire
Is singing his song; where the sunlight gleams
On the wild bee's wing as he drones
His slumberous way o'er the flow'rs.
Here is nothing of envy or hate,
But only the wind, as it moans,
And only the peace of the hours.
Come, where the timberline grows,
Where the ptarmigan hides in the grass,
Where the cool air blows from the summer snows,
Bracingly down from the pass.

But I heard a fay of the wildwood say:
"When the foot of man enters here

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The spirit of peace shall make way
For the hideous spirit of fear.
By the firebrand in his careless hand,
By the refuse piles in his camps,
By the blackened stumps in the desolate land,
By the havoc wrought in his tramps,
You shall know he passed, you shall know at last
The terrible scourge of man,
The terror of flood and of fast,
The weight of his ruinous ban."

I speak with the voice of the wild
To the weary of heart and of mind—
By our plea beguiled, let your hand be mild,
Tear the veil from eyes that are blind.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS.

PAN, the Woodland God.
OUT DOORS, the Spirit of the Wild.
GENERAL PUBLIC, a city man seeking rest.
SPRUCE TREE, Colorado State Tree.
PROTECTION, a Forest Guard.
THE MOON.
EVENING STAR.
BIRTHDAY CAKE.

CREATIVE INFLUENCES

THE SUN, Father of All.
MOTHER NATURE, Matron of the Forest.
SPRING, the Spirit of Creation.
RAIN, CHINOOK, } Harbingers of SPRING.

DESTRUCTIVE INFLUENCES

THE DEMON FIRE.
NORTH WIND, a friend of FIRE.
CIGARETTE, a servant of FIRE.
THE PICNICKERS:
Vandalism, Destruction, Contamination, Carelessness, Selfishness, Thoughtlessness.

Snow Flakes, Fireflies, Autumn Leaves, Fleecy Clouds, Flames, Blazes, Bats, Bull Frogs, Moonbeams, Birds and Flowers, Ants and Aphids, Mosquitos.

THE WOODS FOLK.

Flowers:

COLUMBINE, Colorado State Flower.
ANEMONE, a Harbinger of SPRING.
BUTTERCUP.
INDIAN PAINT BRUSH.
LARKSPUR.
GLOBE CACTUS, a warrior.

Animals:

CHIPMUNK, the Newsboy of the Forest.
MOLLY COTTENTAIL.
WEAZEL.

Birds:

BLUEBIRD, a Harbinger of Spring.
CAMP ROBBER.
MAGPIE.
PAGE TO MAGPIE.
ORIOLE.
THE OWL, a Voice of the Night.

Insects:

THE ANT.
THE APHID.
MOSQUITO.
MALARIA.
BUTTERFLY.

EPISODE I.

A spring dawn in the Forest. In the foreground a depression forms a semi-circular bowl, hemmed in by rocky banks, upon which stand pines and spruces. At the foot of the rear bank is a small pool

PAN: *(as he speaks his shadow image materializes, then fades out)*

It is the silent hour before the dawn;
And Mother Nature lies in dream of days
When summer Sun shall come, and with his sprays
Of golden shafts, renew the life withdrawn.

Among the trees I hear the North Wind roar;
A frosty wraith with scimitar, encrowned
With Northern Lights; in dizzy, whirling round
He bids the Snow Flakes dance their last encore.

NORTH WIND (*blowing Snow Flakes before him*):

Come, little Snow Flakes, scurry along,
Boreas, North Wind, sings you his song.
Cover the flowers, bury them deep,
Winter is Monarch, Spring is asleep;
Zig-zag and waver, weave to and fro,
Blanket the earth with feathery snow.
Feet that are silent, treading the air,
Spirits exquisite, lacy and fair,
Wraiths of the Pole Star, by my arms tossed,
Glittering jewels, sisters of Frost,
Mothers of Ice-bergs (sometime to be)
Prismatic castles floating the sea;
Thronging in millions out of the North,
Out of the Arctic hurrying forth;
Would you live ever? Then dance on my breath,
Cover the wide world with beautiful Death.

(*North Wind sweeps on, and the Snow Flakes gradually subside as he disappears among the trees. Soft, dreamy music floats through the air, and the light increases. Bird notes swell to a chorus*).

PAN:

The Fleecy Clouds, a winsome group of maids,
In cloth of gold, in opalescent shades,
Or draped in rose and orange, trip and run
With billowed veils, to herald Father Sun.

(Fleecy Clouds drift from the trees on either hand, and dance upon the rear bank; then form a double line, through which the rising Sun strides majestically. The Clouds billow their veils as he sings).

THE SUN:

Behold! The Sun am I!
Lord of the earth and sky,
Father of all!
Kindly, beneficient,
Fruitful, magnificent,
Hearken my call!

Wake from your winter sleep,
Wake from your dreams!
Shafts of the lordly Sun,
Dancing Sunbeams,
Down to the wooded hills,
Dart from the sky above,
Longingly Nature thrills,
Thrills to my love.

I call the Spring to me,
Sweet maid of mystery,
Her eyes a-glow;
Within her swelling breast,
There stirs a wild unrest,
The sap streams flow.

Winter is gone—I come!
Winter is gone.
Veiled in their amber robes,
Robes of the dawn,
Clouds of the rosy morn
Herald the Summer Sun;
Earth, you shall be reborn,
Spring has begun.

(The Clouds drift into the Trees).

PAN *(as Chinook enters)*:

A gentle sigh! The Snow Flakes shrink in fear!
Behold, Chinook, the warm West Wind draws near;
The first fair Harbinger of Spring. His breeze
Will send them scurrying beneath the trees.

(Chinook drives away the Snow Flakes).

The Rain descends with leaping, silver feet,
To drum on Nature's breast a magic beat
Until she feels, within her heart, the swell
And stir of seeds, each straining in its cell.

(*Rain scatters water upon the earth*).

Above the sigh of pines comes, soft and clear,
A liquid note; and flashing, darting near,
From leaden winter skies, a bird of blue
Brings back a patch of pure cerulean hue.

(*Bluebird enters with zig-zag, curving flight*).

And lo! Behind that lichen-covered stone,
In coy confusion, shivering alone,
The sweetest Harbinger of Spring I see—
The shy Wind Flow'r, the Blue Anemone.

(*Anemone enters, bowing and swaying gracefully*).

From Winter's gloomy prison, with a rush,
Comes Spring, the glowing dawn her glorious blush,
Her bridal tears the sparkling April show'rs,
Her every footprint starred with gorgeous flow'rs.

(*Spring enters, dancing to bright, airy music, courtesies to Sun and glides into the dance of Creation. As she concludes North Wind sweeps about her with threatening mein*).

With fearsome features, clad in icy mail,
The North Wind threatens gladsome Spring again,
Yet see him fly before Chinook and Rain;
Though ever Death may come, Life shall prevail.

(*Chinook and Rain battle with North Wind, driving him into the depths of the forest. Mother Nature bustles about, rousing the Woods' Folk from sleep*).

Mother Nature's task has not been done;
She dreads displeasure of her Lord, the Sun.
With hurried step she bustles to and fro
To straighten Magpie's cloak, retouch the bow
Of sweet Anemone. Beneath the pine
She looks in vain for tardy Columbine.
With alternating dash and quiet pose—
Inquisitive and friendly—with a nose
For mischief—chirping when he flirts his tail,
The Chipmunk plays with Molly Cottentail.

But Mother Nature has the saucy scamp—
Behind his ears the fur's not even damp.
Though shy, confiding Molly washed her face
She left her nose in state of sad disgrace.
Now, interrupted in a mother's chores,
Old Nature turns to greet the fair Out Doors.

(*Out Doors enters, girlish, vivid, joyous. She greets the Woods Folk happily.*)

OUT DOORS:

Oh, look at Magpie! Here is Chipmunk, too—
Did you sleep warm the long, long winter through?
Sometimes I envy when the North Wind roars,
For I am always, always Out-of-Doors.
And here is Spring, with her sweet, misty eyes,
Bluebird, too, who brings back summer skies.
Shy Anemone, I heard your call—
Good morning, gentle folk, good morning all.

(*Trio.*)

MOTHER NATURE:

The day of birth has come again;
We give our thanks unto the Rain,
The gentle West Wind, too.

Once more do fur and feather pass
In coats of glossy hue,
And flower faces in the grass
Lift eyes of diamond dew.

O, Lantern of the Infinite!
Our Lord, The Sun! We dedicate
Our lives to you.

THE SUN:

I give to earth the blessed light
As, glancing down in level flight,
My golden arrows fall.

(*Shoots golden arrows about the stage, that are picked up by Bluebird, Blackbird, Camp Robber, Oriole, Anemone, Buttercup, Paint Brush and Larkspur.*)

OUT DOORS AND MOTHER NATURE:

We live within a mansion green,
Where pools of sunlight fall between
The purple shadows veil.

Then shed, O Sun, your golden rays
Upon the winding trail
That lures us on with vagrant ways,
Where pilot bluejays sail.

THE SUN:

The Lantern of the Infinite,
The Sun am I—compassionate—
With love for all.

OUT DOORS AND MOTHER NATURE:

We pray, O Sun, do not abate
The light that makes us animate,
Lest joy shall fail.

(Attended by the Woods Folk The Sun ascends to the rear bank, seats himself upon a golden throne. The Woods Folk promenade in review, but suddenly "freeze.")

PAN:

I hear an alien sound. It is the snap
Of deadwood on the ground. And now the clap
Of Mother Nature's hands. The Woods Folk freeze,
And stand as still as are the silent trees.

(General Public enters, disconsolate, homesick for the city that he has left.)

GENERAL PUBLIC:

The doctor told me Out Doors would be here,
A woodland sprite, dispensing rest and cheer
To wearied mortal who will tell his needs—
But naught I find save bug-infested weeds.

(Kicks petulantly at the flowers. Globe Cactus, who has been crouched motionless behind his shield, springs erect.)

PAN:

The Warrior Cactus rears his head in ire—
In bristling armor; morion crowned with fire—
He'll teach that lout to do no injury
To timid flowers—watch the villain flee.

(Cactus jabs General Public viciously with his lance).

GENERAL PUBLIC:

I'm stabbed! What's that? If I but dared I'd kick
That spiny thing. It certainly can stick.

(Backs warily away from Cactus and almost stumbles over Out Doors).

Perchance, are you Out Doors?

OUT DOORS:

To those who wake
To Nature's charms.

GENERAL PUBLIC:

Um-m! She's not hard to take.

OUT DOORS:

To him who wanders here with kindly heart,
Who seeks to leave behind the busy mart
Of men—its dull despairs and raucous noise—
The trees shall give their dignity and poise,
The birds shall sing their sweetest notes and bars;
His thoughts shall take the grandeur of the stars.
The mighty hills shall bring to him surcease
From pain, shall fill his soul with lasting peace.

GENERAL PUBLIC (*boastfully*):

Immense, 'tis true, but they cannot compare
In dignity with city blocks: and fair
Enow the stars—our stars are not so bright—
But you should see our movie row at night!
Your woods are wide—but have you seen the trees
That grace our parks and drives? Not harsh, like these,
Nor scattered, helter-skelter-like the pine,
But set in geometrical design.
Our velvet lawns, our beds of formal flow'rs,
Excel by far your choicest woodland bow'rs.
And melodies of birds? Give me the thrill
Of syncopated song in vaudeville.

OUT DOORS (*indignantly*):

How came you here? You do not love our hills.

GENERAL PUBLIC:

The doctor said that I must rest—or die. Two ills
Confronted me. I chose the worst.

OUT DOORS (*distressed*):

Ah, no!
The Warrior Cactus, true, was rude—but so
Because you hurt a flow'r.

GENERAL PUBLIC:

Is that his name?
Had I an army like him I could tame
The evil foe who drove me here to lurk—

OUT DOORS:

And who is he?

GENERAL PUBLIC (*bitterly*):

The Genie Overwork.

OUT DOORS:

Your ills may be relieved—no anodyne
Can match the odor of the fragrant pine.

GENERAL PUBLIC:

These dreary woods cast over me a pall—
A plague on them. I hear the city call.
(*sings*)

Have you heard the city call,
Heard the traffic roaring,
Seen the buildings, huge and tall,
Into Heaven soaring?
Heard the tread of marching feet,
Watched the faces flowing?
There—as coals in furnace heat—
Vital life is glowing.

Have you watched the people pour,
Every doorway storming,
In and out the crowded store,
Like an ant-hill swarming?
Heard the music in the night,
Love and laughter stirring?
Cities of the brilliant light
All the moths are luring.

(Face lifted, lips smiling, eyes fixed on distance General Public draws away).

OUT DOORS (*in satirical tone*):

A stranger in our woods. How well he sings—
Yet tells not of the moths that singe their wings.
(*sings*)

Lovely Butterflies and Bees
Float about us in the air,
Pollen-freighted agents these,
Couriers of flowers fair.
Ne'er did argonaut of old,
Sailing homeward, bear

Argosies of gems or gold,
Half so rich or rare.
"Pretty things," I hear you say,
"But, my dear, what good are they?"
Lovely Bees and Butterflies—
Save for them the flower dies.

(The wings of Butterfly enter from opposite sides of stage and perform a stately duet dance, culminating when the wings unite and form the perfect Butterfly. As Butterly comes to rest Oriole bursts forth in a whistled solo. Spring, Bluebird, Camp Bird, Blackbird, Oriole, Anemone, Buttercup, Paint Brush, and Larkspur exit to a march step, as Mother Nature sings).

MOTHER NATURE:

Bluebird March and Camp Bird April,
Blackbird May and Oriole June,
Plumage arch and throats a-thrill—
Spring comes tripping by in tune.

Wind Flow'r March and Buttercup April,
Paint Brush May and Larkspur June,
Flowers change as seasons will—
Spring, like youth, must pass too soon.

CURTAIN.

EPISODE II.

SCENE. *The Forest, on a peaceful summer afternoon. (Chipmunk and Weazel enact Pan's prelude).*

PAN:

Two hundred years ago, upon this spot,
A vagrant Chipmunk wandered, like as not,
The ancestor of this elusive scold,
The newsboy of the forest, saucy, bold.

Beneath the gnarled branches of a spruce
He found a cone, and pried the kernal loose,
But, while he turned it in his paws, there came
A wicked Weazel, lean, with eyes a-flame.

The Chipmunk fled, the Weazel in pursuit,
And, when it fell, the naked seed took root
Where now this kingly Spruce Tree rears his head—
There lies the ancient king, among the dead.

It is the birthday of the living Tree—
The Woods Folk soon will hold his jubilee.
The seed that fell but now upon the ground
Will someday dominate the forest round.

(Enter Out Doors, peering cautiously about. She tiptoes back and leads General Public to a fallen log, motioning him to sit beside her).

OUT DOORS:

Be quiet, now, and I will help you see
The Woods' Folk play. But they will not be free
If you should make a sound, or move a hand—
And would you know me you must understand
The secrets of the wild. 'Tis thus or so—
You either love Out Doors, or are her foe.
The old Tree hears not well, but sit you still,
Mayhap you then will see—

GENERAL PUBLIC *(wonderingly)*:

But, girl, until
You spoke I thought no other here but me.

OUT DOORS:

Are you, then, blind? What see you there?

GENERAL PUBLIC (*with growing bewilderment*):

A tree.

(Suddenly he smiles, opens a pocket-knife and starts to carve upon the tree-trunk.)

GENERAL PUBLIC:

Oh, gentle creature, wild as any deer,
I'll carve our love upon the tree-trunk here—
Two hearts entwined as one.

OUT DOORS (*stopping him*):

No—no, not yet,
Or you could never thus so soon forget
My lesson. Know then, that the Tree's life-sap
Flows just beneath the bark that you would tap.

(Elfin music is heard faintly, growing clearer. Out Doors hastily draws General Public back to the log and signs for silence. Enter Mother Nature and the Woods Folk, the Bull Frogs leading Birthday Cake. Each Frog carries a toadstool under one arm).

PAN:

The Woods Folk come with merry prank and play
To hold a summer festival and pay
Their homage to the oldest living thing
Within the forest bounds. The Bull Frogs bring
A Birthday Cake, by Mother Nature stirred.
For it the squirrels collected nuts; each bird
Contributed an egg; the bees brought toll
Of honeyed sweetness from each flower's bowl.
The Water Ouzel, bobbing like a gnome,
The frosted icing gathered, in the foam
From mountain streams, where wild, white waters roar;
With troweled tail the Beaver smoothed it o'er.
The shrubs sent berries by the birds from far;
Each candle there was lit by shooting star.

The hungry Chipmunk volunteers to bear
The Cake upon his back; the debonair
Old Magpie struts, and flirts her handsome tail—
The slyest thief that e'er escaped a jail.
The pirate Camp Bird, too, comes sailing by
And cocks upon the Cake a knowing eye,
While Molly Cottontail, with graceful bound,

In frolic kicks her heels and scampers round.
But all in vain: his ready lance at rest,
The Cactus warns away the early guest.

(*The Bull Frogs leave their burden near Spruce Tree, hop to the rear bank and solemnly seat themselves upon the toadstools, while Cactus does sentry duty around the Cake*).

(*Duet*)

MOTHER NATURE:

Awake, O stately Tree! Desert your dreams.
The Woods Folk would do honor as beseems
Those sheltered long beneath your gnarled snags—
More ancient than the Eagle of the Crags.

(*The Woods Folk gather round in attentive attitudes as the Spirit of the Spruce Tree, until now a gnarled and motionless limb upon the bole of a great spruce, separates from the trunk and steps stiffly forward*).

SPRUCE TREE:

My voice is but a sigh. Yet what I can
I'll tell you (breaking my long silence now)
Of those who rested on my limb and bough.
Two hundred summers have I given shade
To all who came to me, and gladly made
A shelter 'mid my needles, where might rest
The saucy squirrel, where bird might build its nest.
I've cradled Snow Flake here, until the Sun
Has warmed my breast and bid the water run
Adown my limbs, and trickle to the ground
Where thirsty flow'r and waving grass abound.
For I am Conservation. But for me
The Woods Folk could not live. I am the Tree.

SPRUCE TREE AND MOTHER NATURE:

The Tree shall hold in check the snow, and foil
The raging floods that wash away the soil.
Without the Tree the heart of Spring would burst
In grief to see her children die of thirst;
A thousand miles below the forest stand,
Gaunt Famine soon would ravish all the land,
And, sweeping to the haunts of Man, in scorn
Would sack his furrowed fields, would steal his corn.

SPRUCE TREE:

I am the Tree! I am the kingly Tree!
And everlasting peace abides in me,
And peace abides in me.

PAN:

The Bull Frogs to the party add their share;
Comedians are they, grotesque and rare.
In vest of white, in green and spotted cloak,
Each flops about, and gives a hollow croak.

(The Frogs croak lugubriously for a moment, then do an eccentric dance and disappear suddenly, taking the Cake with them, to the consternation of Magpie and Chipmunk. All motion ceases as General Public's voice is heard.)

GENERAL PUBLIC *(sings)*:

Ah, Love, if I were but a tree
I'd stretch my arms to you,
I'd call the vagrant breeze to me,
And on his wings I'd woo.

Ah, Love, if you were but a bird
Returned from Southern skies,
Mayhap you'd hear my whispered word
Of love, my lonely sighs.

Were you a bird and I a tree,
Symmetrical and strong,
Mayhap you'd wing your way to me
And tell your love in song.

(He lights a match and throws it carelessly to one side.)

PAN:

He is a friend of our great enemy,
The Demon Fire. The Woods Folk turn to flee:
But Rain, advancing in the tumult, stays
With sudden, crystal show'r, the threatened blaze;
While Chipmunk, darting near, imprudent, bold,
Entreats Out Doors the careless fool to scold.

(Chipmunk nudges Out Doors and motions her to come away.)

OUT DOORS:
He does not understand. He is of men.
I will instruct him and—

GENERAL PUBLIC:
What said you then?

OUT DOORS:
The Woods Folk do not like to see you play
With Demon Fire.

GENERAL PUBLIC:
The Woods Folk? Who are they?

(He glances over his shoulder, sees Chipmunk, and throws a stone at him.)

OUT DOORS:
Ah! Do not hurt the children of the wild!
Predominant is ruling Man, self-styled
The Wise, the Reasoner—above the beast.
Would you, then, be disdainful of the least
Of Nature's creatures? You, with master mind?
And they are all so beautiful and kind.
When Man was in the Neolithic stage,
With half-a-soul, enslaved by lust and rage,
The Tree it was that raised him from the mire,
That taught him how to prison Demon Fire.
In later ages, too, it was the Tree
That gave him shelter, built his ships at sea.
The kindly Woods Folk, with their gentle eyes,
That lurk about, have since the primal skies
Bestowed their coats on Man to keep him warm,
Give still their furs his women to adorn.
In many ages they have saved the Race
From Famine and from death, and by the grace
Of Him, who gave Man life, and placed them here,
They've helped Man conquer many a wild frontier.
The flowers, too, have brought him endless gain,
The herbs have healed his sickness, soothed his pain;
And e'en the savage wolf, when all was fog,
Evolved to be his faithful friend—the dog.
All patient through the centuries they give
Their lives, their all, to Man that he may live.
To all his vanities, to all his needs,
To every call old Mother Nature speeds.
Why, then, should Man, the Reasoner, destroy
With wanton waste the sources of his joy?

GENERAL PUBLIC *(puzzled but impressed)*:

A wondrous tale. But—what's a Chipmunk worth?

OUT DOORS:

He is, with you, a child of Mother Earth.

(General Public ponders this thought for a moment, but, failing to understand, loses interest, yawns and stretches.)

GENERAL PUBLIC:

Ho-hum! Out Doors, when does the party start?

(Out Doors makes a despairing gesture, then seeks to claim his attention and relieve the anxiety of the Woods Folk by cuddling close to him.)

OUT DOORS:

Let's talk of something else.

GENERAL PUBLIC *(sentimentally)*:

About the heart?

(General Public becomes oblivious to his surroundings, and the Woods Folk relax, point at the couple and smile. An Ant enters through a hole in the bank, where he has his ant-hill. Seeing no enemies he returns and helps forth the Aphid. Other Ants and Aphids follow in single file.)

OUT DOORS *(impulsively)*:

The Ants and Aphids! Did you never hear
The story of their love—so quaint, so queer?

(General Public shakes his head sulkily.)

On summer days the Aphid scatters dew
Upon the leaves—like honey—sticky, too.
The Ant eats this sweet food, and guards his love
From other insects in the trees above.
When winter comes he carries her below,
Within his domy house, away from snow.
Of all the lovers none are quite so true.
As Ant to Aphid—

GENERAL PUBLIC *(with lovelorn sigh)*:

Or as I to you.

(*Duet*)

THE ANT:

In the summertime, in the Green Tree Land,
When you are a fay and I a brigand,
From all other lovers I'll guard you true,
But rob you, sweet, of your honeydew.

(Refrain)

Honey Dew, my love is true,
In Insect Land, fay and brigand,
We live and die beneath the sky,
So deep and blue—My Honey Dew!

THE APHID:

O, gentle robber! O, bold brigand!
Your heart is the bravest in Insect Land;
Take all my honey, dear robber bold,
For you I gathered my virgin gold.

THE ANT:

When the snows have come, and the winter chill,
We shall live in the halls of the big ant hill;
Like a Samurai in my coat of mail,
By my two great swords shall I live or fail.

THE APHID:

O, my warrior bold, with your two great swords,
To you I entrust my golden hoards,
With your waving antennæ pray kiss my bill,
While we live in the halls of the big ant hill.

Honey Dew, my love is true,
In Insect Land, fay and brigand,
We live and die beneath the sky,
So deep and blue. My Honey Dew!

(The Woods Folk fall in line and file by General Public and Out Doors.)

PAN:

Through all the wooded hills, like thread of gold,
There runs the motive thought—to have—to hold—
The Ants and Aphids, flowers and the birds,
File by in tune unto those magic words.
With mincing steps, with sighs and glances arch,
In carefree play they hold a wedding march,

And foot it to the merry Pipes of Pan,
To tease the maid, and mock the love-blind Man.

(Magpie officiates in marrying Ant and Aphid. The other Ants and Aphids act as best men and bridesmaids; then disappear through the ant hill door.)

PAN *(as Columbine enters)*:

The fairest flow'r of all! Sweet Columbine
Is worthy of an ode, a sacred shrine;
The symbol and the soul of all the wild—
When Columbine was born the angels smiled.

GENERAL PUBLIC:

Ah! What a lovely flower here—the blue
Shall tell that love like mine is always true.
The white is pure—like you.

(Jerks Columbine from her place and drags her toward Out Doors. The Woods Folk shudder and cover their faces with their hands.)

OUT DOORS *(shrinking as from a murderer)*:

Poor Columbine!
Her nature is so delicate and fine,
Her feet so lightly rooted she will die
Whene'er she's handled roughly. Hear her sigh!

(General Public lets Columbine fall and draws back uncertainly, passing his hand across his eyes. He silently watches Out Doors run to Columbine's side.)

OUT DOORS *(sings)*:

Though mine eyes have seen the beauty
Of the lilies, and the glow
Of the scarlet Flanders poppies
Nodding gravely, row on row,
There's a flower in my homeland
That the angels might entwine
In their hair to give it lustre—
Colorado's Columbine.

(Refrain):

Sweet Columbine, Sweet Columbine,
Beneath the aspen and the pine,
You seem a gift from Heaven above,
How fair you blow, like sky and snow,
The spirit of the land I love—
The flower of this state of mine,
Sweet Columbine, Sweet Columbine.

When the sun sheds golden glory
O'er the far-flung hills at dawn,
From a world azure and silver
Are your lovely colors drawn,
From the great white peaks that tower,
And the glacial lakes below,
From the deep blue sky above you,
And the pearly clouds a-blow.

(Refrain.)

(CURTAIN)

EPISODE III.

SCENE:

(Sunset hour in the Forest on an autumn evening. Patches of golden quaking aspen mingle with the dark green of the spruces. General Public is seated disconsolately on the bank.)

PAN:

Across the Great Divide the final flight
Of golden arrows, shot by Father Sun,
Brings tidings to the world that day is done.
Amid the trees foregather shades of night,
And twilight drifts along the mountain bar.
Below the East horizon steals the glow
Of rising Moon. The shadows ebb and flow,
And lightly through the trees comes Evening Star.

GENERAL PUBLIC:

I think that she must be displeased with me
For I have sought in vain behind each tree,
And searched through every wooded nook so long.
I have not seen her since she sang the song
Of Columbine. I yearn for her.

THE OWL *(a voice of the night)*:

Who? Who?

GENERAL PUBLIC:

Out Doors, old Owl, that sweet and gentle child
Who sought to teach me secrets of the wild.

(Evening Star dances in graceful, controlled measure as tranquil music floats upon the air.)

GENERAL PUBLIC *(sings)*:

O, Evening Star,
How beautiful you are,
Above the world
So mystical and far.
Are you the soul
Of her whom I adore?
And has she gone
From me, forevermore?

Oh, ray serene,
By countless lovers seen,
With my lost love

I pray you intervene.
Oh, lead me on
To where her feet doth stray
With fairy step
Along your shining way.

(As the song draws to a close, Evening Star glides from sight.)

PAN:

The eerie Night arrives with backward glance,
A bursting bomb of inky Bats, that dance
In headlong flight, a dizzy rigadoon,
To usher forth their sovereign Queen—the Moon.

(The erratic, fitful movement of the Bats is followed immediately by the solo dance of Moon. The Moon beams follow, as Out Doors steals upon the stage, hiding from General Public.)

OUT DOORS:

O, Moonbeams of the summer night,
O, Moonbeams of the soft, clear light,
The world beneath your magic seems
A fairy place of love and dreams.
Sweet memories throng forth to dance
Upon your quiv'ring radiance,
And silver-footed fancies take
The sparkling pathway o'er the lake.

(Refrain):

O, Moon of love and languor,
O, Moon of summer night,
Oh, tell me please the whyfor
You thrill me with delight.
Is it because you clad her
Wee feet with silver shoon?
Or did you lend her eyes, dear,
The mystic light of the Moon.

O, Harvest Moon, O Blood-Red Moon,
With hayricks creaking out of tune,
O Blue Moon that the wild folks know,
O Mating Moon that they love so;
A vision every Moonbeam brings—
There comes the glint of silver wings,
And, lighter than a breath of air,
Love's kiss is laid upon her hair.

General Public *(in ecstacy)*:
It is her voice, her own sweet voice,
And I must follow on—I have no choice.

(Rushes after the receding Moonbeams. The stage has by this time become dark.)

Out Doors:
He is succumbing fast to Nature's spell,
Sometimes he hears the voices. I can tell
That soon the light will come to his dear eyes.
Come folks and dance. Where are the Fireflies?
(The music holds the love them while the Fireflies dance.)

(Suddenly an automobile horn toots. With boisterous laughter, loud talk and rude actions a group of Picnickers enter, coming through the audience. They are dressed in ridiculous manner for an outing in the hills. The women wear outing trousers, silk stockings, low shoes, and peek-a-boo or georgette waists. The men have straw hats, silk shirts, white duck trousers ,and low shoes. They cluster about a Forest Service sign, momentarily quiet as they read.)

Pan:
The Picnickers arrive! Now woe betide
The flowers, far too innocent to fear.
Alone the Camp Bird boldly lingers near—
In panic all the other Woods Folk hide.

Destruction *(pointing to sign)*:
Guests please register. (*Laughter.*)

Thoughtlessness:
Let's write our names. (*Writes—then points to the sign.*)
Thoughtlessness—that's me!

Selfishness:
Let me register next. I ought to come first.
There—Selfishness.

Carelessness *(scrawls diagonally across sign.)*:
I'm not much on style but you see "Carelessness" when I get through.

Contamination:
C-o-n-t-a-m-i-n-a-t-i-o-n. Contamination!

Vandalism:
There's my moniker—Vandalism! Watch me put a period to it.
(*Picks up stone and hurls it at sign.*)

DESTRUCTION:

Last, but not least—yours truly—Destruction!
Gee! This is a dandy thing to start our fire.

(Tears down the sign, carries it toward the pool, and chops it up. Contamination and Vandalism stroll clumsily about, bumping into such Woods Folk as get in their way, while the women unpack the lunch, Selfishness sampling each article of food.)

DESTRUCTION:

This wood is damp. I can't start the fire.

CARELESSNESS *(smooths out a newspaper and glances over the page)*:

Here's a piece in this paper about forest fires. (*Reads*): "Forest fires each year destroy enough timber to build a city as large as Chicago. Burn your papers and rubbish, and put out your camp fire before you leave."

THOUGHTLESSNESS *(yawns)*:

Give that to Destruction. It's dry enough to start a fire in the rain.

(Carelessness hands the paper to Destruction, scattering others over the ground.)

CONTAMINATION *(peeling a banana)*:

I wonder if there's fish in this pool? I'll feed them.

(He throws the peeling into the water, then deliberately spits in the pool.)

THOUGHTLESSNESS:

Now, you've spoiled the water and I wanted a drink. Don't you ever think of others?

(The Picnickers gather round the fire to eat lunch.)

PAN:

Ah! Evil is the day when that young fool
Comes hither to contaminate the pool.
The limpid spring that careless men defile
Soon swarms with deadly germs—with Typhoid vile.
A host of pests the stagnant waters bring—
Mosquito grinds his fever-laden sting.

(Enter Mosquitoes. They carry grindstones upon which they sharpen their bills; then, tentatively try them upon the Picnickers, who slap savagely at the insects.)

MOSQUITO *(the leader sings)*:

I am a most affectionate Mosquito,
My mother is Contaminated Water,
I have a lengthy bill the doctors envy—
And Fever is—my daughter.

(Chorus of Mosquitoes):

Zizz-Zizz-Zizz! Zizz-Zizz-Zizz!
How I love mankind—Gee Whiz!
Think a baby is a dream,
Love a lady with cold cream
Spread upon her phiz—
Aids my drill to make her scream.
Zizz-Zizz-Zizz!

I am an ardent devotee of fashion,
I simply love the peek-a-boo creation,
Those clockwork stockings sure increase my ration—
And cause me—much elation.

(Chorus.)

SELFISHNESS:

Oh, ain't these flowers cute? What's their name?
They came up by the root and got me all over dirt.

OUT DOORS:

Oh, stop her please! Prevent these cruel deeds.
The plants have been destroyed! There'll be no seeds.

(Cactus jabs Selfishness violently. She screams, drops the flowers and rushes to the fire.)

SELFISHNESS:

A rattlesnake bit me! I'm going to die!

VANDALISM:

It's just a Cactus. I'll chop it down.

(Strikes at Cactus with the ax, but meets the same fate, and hastily retreats, nursing his arm.)

Stick where you are, then (*Dodges a feint by Cactus*). I'll go elsewhere.

SELFISHNESS:

Hit him again. Don't you love me, any more?

VANDALISM *(abstractedly, watching Cactus)*:

Yes—oh, yes. (*Aside*) Up to a certain *point*.

(The Mosquitoes renew their attack in a cloud, and the Picnickers slap vigorously.)

SELFISHNESS:

Cactus! Mosquitoes! This is a rotten place you boys brought us.

VANDALISM:

Let's shoo them away.

(Breaks a branch from a tree and waves it desperately, while the others follow his example. Mosquito leads Malaria forward.)

MALARIA *(sings)*:

I am a microscopic germ
From far away Liberia,
My grip upon mankind is firm—
I am the dread Malaria.

(Chorus of Mosquitoes):

O Laria! Ma-Laria!
The fairest of bacteria,
In ecstacy my being thrills
To all your sweet miasmic chills—
My microbe from Liberia!
Or did you say Algeria?

(Mosquito and Malaria sting Selfishness, who suddenly sinks to the ground in extreme weariness, then has a violent chill.)

SELFISHNESS *(wailing)*:

I'm cold. I've got a chill—I'm going to die!

MALARIA:

I travel on Mosquito's wing,
(He loves his dear Malaria);
I enter humans through his sting,
And drive them to hysteria.

(Chorus.)

(Camp Robber cautiously sails toward center stage in a long, graceful glide, snatches a crust of bread and starts away.)

CONTAMINATION:

Look at that bird.

CARELESSNESS:

Ain't he got nerve.

DESTRUCTION:

But watch me get him. *(Seizes a gun and shoots Camp Robber.)*

OUT DOORS *(frantically)*:

Oh, cruel Man!

GENERAL PUBLIC *(his conscience stung)*:

That measure was too strong—
The little bird was doing him no wrong.

(The Picnickers gather around Camp Robber and laugh callously at the dying bird.)

CARELESSNESS:

These Mosquitoes are getting fierce.

SELFISHNESS:

Aw! Let's go somewhere else. This place is the bunk.

(Destruction throws a lighted cigarette to the ground and the Picnickers exit, followed through the audience by the Mosquitoes, singing Zizz-Zizz-Zizz! Out Doors, General Public, Mother Nature and the Woods Folk carry Camp Robber away. The glow from the burning fire spreads, and North Wind is seen fanning the blaze. With a burst of fiendish laughter Fire appears.)

DEMON FIRE *(sings)*:

Come friend, blow hard! And whistle Cigarette!

(North Wind whistles shrilly.)

Chinook is wooing Rain. We have time yet
To blast the hateful Tree—the foe of Fire.

(Cigarette enters and runs to Fire.)

Away! Begone! We'll make these woods the pyre
Of every bird and beast. Destroy their stores,
And bring to me the beautiful Out Doors.

(North Wind and Cigarette dash off to execute Fire's orders, Cigarette starting blazes as he goes. The stage becomes bathed in crimson light. A steady roar of wind and flames is heard.)

DEMON FIRE *(sings)*:

I am the Demon Fire!
Once I dwelt not below.
In the dim, long ago
My place was higher.

I was the Element
Primal, the Fire Mist,
Over the Earth I hissed—
From Chaos sent.

Mine was the shaping hand;
After me came the slime,
Life sprang from it in time—
Then came the Land.

I, in destroying ire,
Lit the volcanic cone,
Lightning obeyed my tone—
My wrath was dire.

There from my burning throne
I drove the sunsets on,
Kindled the splendid dawn—
Ruled I alone.

Then came accursed Man,
Creature of slime and ooze,
Stole me by crime and ruse,
Chained me and ran.

I, that was Lord, and free,
Come at his beck and call.
Life could not hold me thrall
Save for the Tree.

I call my ally, Breeze,
Summon the Firebrand,
Issue my stern command—
Burn all the Trees!

Blazes climb higher! Higher!
Nothing my wrath shall quell,
Glaring and terrible—
I am the Fire!

Flames of my hot desire,
Leap to the firmament.
Roaring, magnificent—
I am the Fire!

(Six Flames and six Blazes leap from concealment and whirl about Fire in a mad, furious dance. North Wind enters, driving before him a group of fluttering Autumn Leaves.)

North Wind *(sings)*:

Whirl on! Whirl on! You silly, rustling leaves;
On every hill your Mother Aspen grieves,
And quaking when she hears the North Wind howl,
The hour dreads when she must don my cowl

Of snow. Engirt by Flames the Demon Fire
Awaits his pretty leaves with fierce desire.

(Flames and Blazes swoop forward, surround Autumn Leaves and drive them to the wings, consuming them.)

(Quartette)

SPRUCE TREE:
Two hundred winters have I faced the foe,
Defied the North Wind, triumphed o'er the snow.

GENERAL PUBLIC *(enters hurriedly)*:
The Demon Fire has swept Out Doors from me,
And clothed in sheets of flame her friend the Tree.

DEMON FIRE:
In triumph now I sound my battle-cry,
And fling my lurid banners to the sky.

NORTH WIND:
I fan the Flames! I shepherd Winter snows!
All Nature shrinks in fear when North Wind blows.

SPRUCE TREE:
Unbowed I've held my lordly head on high,
In grandeur lived, and grandly shall I die.

GENERAL PUBLIC:
Are these the woods that gave me sweet release
From pain: her quiet refuge, filled with peace.

(Spruce Tree, Fire, General Public, North Wind):
The Woods Folk dash in panic, to and fro,
Their joy has fled; their hearts are filled with woe.
With spears of flame the Fire stabs the Tree,
The Demon Fire burns his enemy.
The Tree must go! The kindly Tree must go!
No more he'll hear the bird songs, sweet and low.
Above the storm the Demon Fire roars,
And who shall hear your feeble cry, Out Doors?
Ah! Who shall heed Out Doors?

(The Woods Folk are seen running wildly between the trees. Fire, Flames and Blazes whirl around while North Wind dashes away to find Out Doors. A Forest Guard enters.)

PROTECTION:
Ah! Cigarette and all the vicious crew!
I'll chase the villain off. Here's work to do.

(Protection battles Fire and they struggle to the rear.)

PROTECTION *(to General Public, who is bewildered)*:

Come, lend a hand, good fellow, quick! This way!
How stand you there indifferent? Woulds't delay?
Your playgrounds are attacked. The North Wind roars,
And Fire seeks to kidnap fair Out Doors.
Release your spirit, free your prisoned mind,
Conventional ideas have made you blind.

(General Public starts violently, and passes his hands over his eyes. The Woods Folk crowd about him for the first time, pointing into the depths of the Forest. General Public rushes to the aid of Protection, and they drive Fire off-stage. The Woods Folk group together, gesticulating anxiously. Fire, Flames, Blazes, North Wind, Cigarette, flee across the back stage, silhouetted against the sky. General Public enters from the top bank, carrying Out Doors to the front stage, where he lays her upon the ground. The gray light of another dawn steals through the devastated Forest. Rain enters, sprinkling drops of water over the ground. The light steadily grows stronger as General Public sings.)

GENERAL PUBLIC:

Out Doors, come back! Do not desert me now!
Oh, gentle Woods Folk, hear my earnest vow.
I've been so heedless of this kindly band,
But so because I did not understand.
I shall be grateful to the Tree for shade,
Of me the Chipmunk shall not be afraid;
The happy birds I never shall molest,
And flowers, where they grow, I'll love the best.
This hand shall never more in sport despoil
The Tree of bough; contaminate or soil
The pure waters of the spring; no spark
Shall lurk behind me in my fires to mark
The trail of selfishness; my camps shall tell
That here passed one who loved Out Doors so well
He left her as he found her, sweet and kind,
To cheer the weary heart, the tired mind.

(Out Doors gradually revives and smiles with delight at his words. She stretches her arms to the audience and sings.)

OUT DOORS:

Though dying I shall rise to those who woo
With kindly words. Won't you protect me, too?

(The Woods Folk laugh happily as a rainbow of promise appears in the sky.)

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